

# **THE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY**

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## **SOCIAL CLASS AND TEACHER TRAINING**

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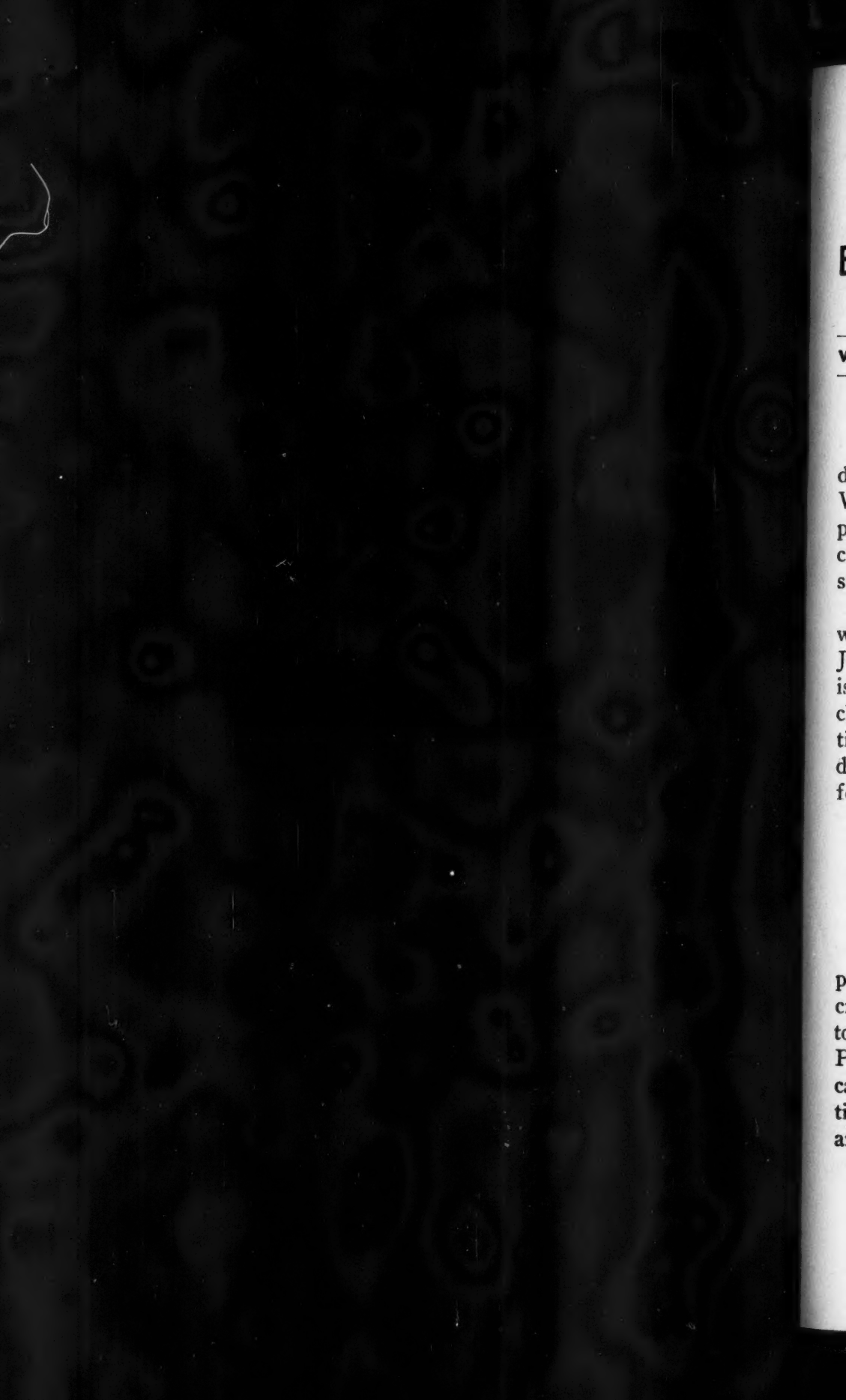
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# THE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY

*A Magazine of Theory and Practice*

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## EDITORIAL

Social class is becoming increasingly recognized as a dynamic in education. Whether one subscribes to the Warner classification or not, the factor of social status permeates the entire endeavor from teacher behavior to child motivation. Many researches, in many directions, are spelling out the relationships involved.

It seemed appropriate to tie together the four Studies which are herewith published as a special number of the JOURNAL. Hence the editors turned to Prof. Rath for an issue editor, and asked him to write a preface and a conclusion. This he has done admirably. In spite of the limitations he raises, it is our belief that the accretion of these data is gradually building toward the hypothesis he calls for in the Study.

Dan W. Dodson

## RESEARCH IN EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY

**Louis E. Rath**

Sociologists and their colleagues in the several allied departments of instruction and research have been severely criticized for their interest in details which are unrelated to hypotheses concerning the larger functioning of society. Professional workers in these fields are also criticized because they fail to make explicit their underlying assumptions about ways in which individual human beings grow and develop, submit and resist, are positively or negatively

motivated. It is further charged that so much of the present data-collecting is a form of busy-work. Instead of collecting data which bear upon carefully formulated hypotheses, huge amounts of data are gathered and then examined and analyzed "to see what they prove." Any such scrutiny, no matter how carefully done, of facts gathered in this manner, cannot result in warranted assertions about the truth or falsity of the generalizations drawn from the data.

This skirmishing with community activities, this collecting of facts about housing, or employment, or delinquency, or social class, or any of the other many aspects of social living, can only result, at their best, in the formulation of hypotheses which will stand or fall in the light of subsequent controlled testing. The lack of direction to guide the collection of data leads to researches from which conclusions cannot be drawn. It leads also to a pre-occupation with technique or process apart from the meanings which both may have for associated human living. Sociological research in its preoccupation with activities, with surveys, with particulars, and with methodology, tends to have little direction. It becomes less and less concerned with large social ideas, or with philosophical or psychological assumptions relating to the behavior of individuals or groups, or societies.

Even in his pursuit of particulars, the sociological investigator has not been greatly interested in the many varieties of human behavior which seem to be involved when an individual *puts meaning* into his life activities. Grossly inadequate attention has been given to the investigation of purposes, of feelings, of attitudes, of interests, of convictions, of action, of thinking, of aspirations, and of the interpretations made by all of us when we invoke our own conception of the role of history. We have little or no reliable information about decision-making at the individual or group level. We know little or nothing in a scientific sense about values because we have not learned how to ex-

periment with value-oriented hypotheses.

Much has been written about group processes and group dynamics and group atmosphere but here, too, the researches are few in number which are designed to test hypotheses. As a matter of fact, we have been at a loss for clearly defined ways of structuring a group, for clearly defined tasks to which the differently structured groups might be assigned, and for carefully formulated hypotheses which would guide our recording of facts about performance and interaction as these groups were being observed in action.

To put it briefly, our researches do not clarify the meanings of life in social groups, because in their conception they are unrelated to significant ideas about the world in which we live. We shall be able to draw sound conclusions about 'ways of life' only when our researches are informed in their intent, their design, and their operations, by thoughtfully formed ideas that have meaning for a way of life.

We are seeking more effective designs for 'controlled' research. We recognize a control factor as one which can be known to observers before a study is begun, and which can be demonstrated to have some relationship to one or more findings of the study which will increase the ability to predict those findings within known limits of probable error.

A *controlled* experiment, therefore, is one in which the prediction is reasonably accurate. In some situations one or two control factors may be sufficient for achieving *control* of the experimental testing of an hypothesis. In other situations, we may need many factors before we can approximate reasonably accurate predictions of results. The test of control lies in the degree of prediction: poor prediction means poor control. For many inquiries we have inadequate control factors, and hence, our inquiries as a whole do not meet the desired criterion.

In addition to these comments on sociological research, one should mention the inadequate attention that usually is given to possible alternative hypotheses. In those few

studies where an explicitly formulated hypothesis has been put to the test, the investigator seldom takes time to investigate the plausibility of alternative hypotheses. Under these circumstances, a rival hypothesis which is unexplored may be as satisfactory an explanation of the trends as the hypothesis under investigation. The so-called "law of parsimony" is seldom called into functioning as a criterion for the selection of the best hypothesis amongst several that are plausible. We should expect researchers to give much more attention to the several possible explanations, and that any single selection would be justified in terms of a more comprehensive discussion of the evidence as it relates to all of the hypotheses.

The tasks ahead are now more clear. We do need hypotheses of significance to guide our research; we need designs which will prove adequate to test those hypotheses; we need to identify, before initiation of an inquiry, control factors of probable merit, and we must demonstrate their relatedness to the findings; we must be able to show the degree to which prediction is possible and the probable errors of that prediction; and we must show the bearing of the evidence on rival hypotheses.

The investigations which are reported in the following pages all deal with the subject of social class status. All of the inquiries are directly and closely related to education, and they merit close attention from the reader who is interested in educational policy making, educational administration, educational sociology, or teacher-training in general. All of these studies have a direct relationship to what has thus far been said about research, and while each stands by itself, these introductory remarks of a more general research nature may serve to guide the reader in his own appraisals of the work here presented. A section immediately following these presentations is given over to the Issue Editor for evaluative comments.

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## OUR STATUS SYSTEM AND SCHOLASTIC REWARDS

Stephen Abrahamson

Cultural anthropologists and sociologists alike seem agreed today on the idea that wherever man lives with man in sufficient numbers, there will arise a social status system based on specific criteria for each culture. Although many Americans have denied and often still deny that there is a social status system in our society, a more general acceptance of the concept has evolved. The idea of a status system need not be antithetical to democratic principles if the keys to mobility—no matter what the criteria of status—are available to all in such a manner that each man may achieve the status which he is desirous and capable of achieving.

In our society, the evidence seems to point to five ways of "improving" social status:

1. *Marriage.* It is possible for a man or woman to choose a mate from a social class higher in the social scale... and thus be in a position to gain acceptance by that class...
2. *Personality.* Sometimes it is possible for a person with a pleasing 'personality' and the ability to adapt to new behavior patterns easily and gracefully to gain acceptance into a 'higher' social class by using his 'personality', 'charm', and 'manners'...
3. *Special Talent.* Some very talented persons are able to gain acceptance to 'higher' social classes because they are 'gifted' in one way or another...
4. *Sheer Perseverance.* Some persons by possessing a double quality of capacity and ability can 'work their way up'. These people have the capacity to apply themselves to their work up to sixteen hours a day and the ability to do a creditable job...



5. *Education.* Some people are able to train themselves for 'better' occupations and greater earning power. Occupation is the greatest single factor in determining social class and money is necessary for the symbols of status. Thus education is of great importance to the average person of lower class standing when it comes to mobility...<sup>1</sup>

The first four of these "keys" to mobility are available to limited numbers of persons. Only the key supplied by education can be said to be available to almost everyone. However, to what extent do we in America make education available to all? It is true that in most states there are laws making attendance in school compulsory at least between the ages of eight and sixteen. But from extensive evidence Warner points out that a "myth is built around compulsory school attendance. It is believed the authorities 'make the children go to school' until they are sixteen years of age."<sup>2</sup> He further indicates that his Jonesville study indicated that "74% of the 345 adolescents out of school in the spring of 1942 had withdrawn from school before they were sixteen years of age."<sup>3</sup>

There are questions to be considered about the children who are in school. Is the treatment they receive such as to offer them real equality of educational opportunity? Does a child's social status (his family's status, that is) help determine what success he might achieve in school? The following data were compiled in an effort to test the hypothesis: there is a relationship between the social class status positions of students in a community and the rewards and punishments received by students.

Six different communities were chosen as a "proving ground." Two of them were urban; two were suburban; and the other two were away from large urban centers. At least three home room groups from each school were included — one seventh, one eighth, and one ninth-grade group. Warner's Index of Status Characteristics<sup>4</sup> was em-

ployed to determine the social status of these students. Table 1 shows the distribution in the six schools according to social class status of the students. School No. 1 and School No. 2 are the suburban schools; School No. 3 and School No. 4 are those away from a large urban center; School No. 5 and School No. 6 are the urban schools. It is interesting to note that the schools are arranged in order of decreasing upper-middle class population. In other words, the two suburban schools had the highest percentage of upper-middle class students; the two urban schools had the lowest percentage of upper-middle class students. Table 1 is read as follows: 26.00 per cent of the students in the sample from School No. 1 were in the upper-middle class; 40.00 per cent of the students were in the lower-middle class; 29.00 per cent of the students were in the upper-lower class; 5.00 per cent of the students were in the lower-lower class. The notation  $N=100$  refers to the fact that there were 100 students included in the sample from School No. 1.

TABLE 1  
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN EACH  
SOCIAL CLASS BY SCHOOLS

Social Class	Schools						Total
	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 5	No. 6	
Upper-Middle	26.00	21.05	20.29	10.00	5.15	1.03	13.19
Lower-Middle	40.00	51.88	28.99	33.53	35.29	16.49	35.46
Upper-Lower	29.00	19.55	39.13	46.47	52.94	54.64	40.57
Lower-Lower	5.00	7.52	11.59	10.00	6.62	27.83	10.78
Total	100.00 N=100	100.00 N=133	100.00 N=69	100.00 N=170	100.00 N=136	99.99 N=97	100.00 N=705

Once the social class status of the students was determined, the next step of the work was to examine the distributions of rewards and punishments. The following six reward and punishment factors were studied:

1. Academic grades on report cards and/or permanent records.
2. Favors and punishments by the teachers as measured by two scales appearing in *Student Status and Social Class*.
3. Social acceptance of the students by their peers.
4. Offices held by the students in school and/or classroom government.
5. Participation by the students in extra-curricular activities.
6. Prizes and awards made by the school.

A proportionate distribution of each of the six reward factors was drawn up. This proportionate distribution was based on the population distribution according to social class. In other words, where twenty-six per cent of the population sample was upper-middle class, they would be expected to receive twenty-six per cent of the A's, twenty-six per cent of the B's, etc.; they would be expected to hold twenty-six per cent of the offices; they would be expected to receive twenty-six per cent of the high social acceptance scores, etc. These proportionate distributions were then compared to the actual distributions. Although this procedure is purely a statistical device, it is discussed more fully later.

The grades assigned to the students by the teachers were tallied according to the social class status backgrounds of the students. The evidence was overwhelming. The students in the upper-middle and lower-middle classes received much more than their proportionate share of the high grades and much less than their proportionate share of the low grades. The students in the upper-lower and lower-lower classes received just the opposite: that is, less than their proportionate share of the high grades and more than their proportionate share of the low grades. Table II indicates that upper-middle class students received 343 A's and B's compared to their share of 216 while they also received only

19 D's and E's compared to their share of 75. At the other end of the scale, the lower-lower class students received 48 A's and B's compared to their share of 147 while they received 136 D's and E's compared to their share of 51.

TABLE II  
DISTRIBUTION OF ACADEMIC GRADES  
BY SOCIAL CLASS

Social Class	Grades	
	A and B	D and E
Upper- Middle	343 (216)	19 (75)
Lower- Lower	48 (147)	136 (51)

In addition, there was a marked tendency for the schools with the greater percentage of upper-middle class students to give out more high grades and fewer low grades than the schools with the smallest percentages of upper-middle class students.

According to the teachers themselves, there was a tendency to favor the students from higher social class backgrounds. The teachers indicated that the students of higher social class backgrounds were chosen more often for the little favors — running errands, monitoring, committee chairman, and the like — than were the other children. Conversely, when it came to handing out disciplinary measures, there was a tendency for the students of lower social class backgrounds to receive much more than their share according to the ratings of the teachers.

Participation in extra-curricular activities in a school program acts as a reward in that the students involved in the activities develop a deeper sense of appreciation for school, a higher level of morale, and a keen feeling of sharing in the school program. Again, the evidence was obvious.

The higher the social class background of the students, the more they tended to participate in extra-curricular activities. The lower the social class background, the more the students tended to participate in no extra-curricular activities.

In three of the six schools the social class status backgrounds of the students winning the much-coveted American Legion Award for the last three years were investigated. Of eighteen winners, fourteen were of upper-middle class background and the other four of lower-middle class background. *No upper-lower and lower-lower class students were among the winners.* The social class distribution of the winners comes into sharper focus when examined against the fact that one-third of the sample populations from the three schools were in the two lower classes.

How about the rewards distributed by the students themselves? The information about the early adolescent indicates that a powerful motivating force in the lives of this age group is social acceptance. Here, again, the evidence is clear. The students from the higher social class backgrounds tended to receive higher social acceptance scores while the students from lower social class backgrounds tended to receive lower social acceptance scores.

Table III indicates that forty-five upper-middle class students received high social acceptance scores compared to their share of those scores of twenty-two. Only twenty-seven upper-middle class students received low scores compared to their share of forty-eight. The reverse relationship is true of the lower-lower class students.

The nature of the Ohio Social Acceptance Scale brought out a piece of incidental information that is very interesting. The scoring of the test yields two scores for each student: one, his acceptance rating by members of the opposite sex; the other, his acceptance rating by members of the same sex. In all the schools, both same sex and opposite sex



distributions were significantly related to social class backgrounds of the students. It is interesting to note, however, that in every school except one, the opposite sex scores were not so closely class-bound as were the same sex scores.

TABLE III  
DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE  
SCORES BY SOCIAL CLASS

Social Class	Scores	
	High	Low
Upper	45	27
Middle	(22)	(48)
Lower-	3	62
Lower	(19)	(40)

Almost all secondary schools have some provision for student participation in government. The six schools included here were no exceptions. There was a great variety of offices — from the usual class presidents, student representatives and bankers to unusual town meeting sergeants-at-arms and panel discussion moderators.

In all of the six schools, almost all of the offices were held by upper-middle and lower-middle class students. *No lower-lower class student held an office.* The upper-middle class students held approximately three times their share of offices while the upper-lower class students held less than one-third of their share of offices.

It is interesting to note that in the schools where there was a higher percentage of upper-middle class students there were more offices for the students to hold. It is almost as if the provision of opportunity for participation in student government activities were proportional to the percentage of upper-middle class students in the school population.

Just how important are these rewards and punishments? An integral part of the educative process is motivation of learning. It is generally accepted today that rewards provide

the strongest motivation in a learning situation. In summarizing research on the use of rewards and punishments, Bird points out that "...learning should be attended by reward and directed by instruction whenever maximum efficiency and adjustment to social demands are desired."<sup>5</sup> Karen Horney indicates that success is one of the greatest encouragements to further success.<sup>6</sup> Finally, Burton has this to say about punishments:

Is punishment ever effective in building good habits? At first glance it would seem that punishment, being attended by annoyance, would be effective in stamping out undesirable habits. However, the annoyance is apt in many cases to be attached, not to the act, but to the *agent of punishment* or to the 'getting found out.'<sup>7</sup>

Teachers in the public school have an obligation in the interest of the furthering of democratic goals to provide learning incentives for *all* children. Since rewards provide motivation and punishments often induce "giving up," equality of opportunity through education carries with it a need for equality in the distribution of rewards and punishments.

In carrying out this study the investigator made use of a theory of proportionate distribution — described earlier in the discussion. Strenuous objection to the use of this device stems from the application of a rival hypothesis to the distribution of rewards and punishments, namely: that the distribution of rewards is related to *intelligence* and that through the relationship of intelligence to social class, a relationship between rewards and social class appears. The work of Allison Davis indicates that such a hypothesis is really begging the question.<sup>8</sup> His studies of intelligence and intelligence testing show that present measures of intelligence for the most part have been derived from testing situations that favor children of higher social class backgrounds and that lower class children have essentially the same average intelligence as higher class children. His findings are supplemented by the UNESCO *Statement on Race* — a

statement endorsed by the world's leading authorities in anthropology, sociology, biology, and psychology. The statement says in part:

It is now generally recognized that intelligence tests do not in themselves enable us to differentiate between what is due to innate capacity and what is the result of environmental influences, training and education. Wherever it has been possible to make allowances for differences in environmental opportunities, the tests have shown essential similarity in mental characteristics among all human groups.<sup>9</sup>

While admittedly students of greater native intelligence should be able to reap the rewards of a competitive situation, the indications are, at present, that these junior high school students of higher social class background are gathering the fruits of our public education system in competition with students of lower social class background who probably possess equal intelligence. Students "earn" rewards in schools today usually on the basis of academic achievement, "correct" social behavior, and personality and leadership qualities. Children from higher social class background homes probably begin school with an advantage in the first two of those factors. The early advantage may obtain for them more praise and recognition from the teachers and more rewards than for their equally capable classmates who enter school at a disadvantage because of their social class background. The advantage for the students from the higher social classes probably grows, bringing about personality and leadership quality gains for these people, while an attitude of general discouragement is probably fostered in the hearts of the children from lower social class backgrounds.

By the time the children are in the junior high schools, the pattern is overwhelmingly noticeable. It is not just coincidence that children of higher social class background seem to have cornered the market in rewards. It is not coincidence that the basis for rewards in the junior high schools corresponds to the advantages with which the chil-

dren of higher social class backgrounds come to school. The reward and penalty systems of junior high schools reflect the values and standards of the higher social class groups. Furthermore, teachers, being largely of middle class background themselves, are probably operating in a way that reflects the values of our status system and — albeit unconsciously — are treating the students of higher social class backgrounds with extra rewards, the students of lower social class backgrounds with extra punishments, and the “middle” group of students quite fairly, in general.

In a world torn by strife between the adherents of rival ideologies, the future of our democratic way of life may well depend on how well we live our democracy at home. A glaring discrepancy between what is said about equality of opportunity in education and what actually exists has been pointed up. The situation thus described presents a great challenge to education today. The acceleration of living and the evergrowing crescendo of crisis give us cause to wonder how much time is left to tackle the problem.

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<sup>1</sup> Louis E. Rath and Stephen Abrahamson, *Student Status and Social Class*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> W. Lloyd Warner and Associates, *Democracy in Jonesville*, pp. 205-206.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> W. Lloyd Warner, Marchia Meeker, Kenneth Eells, *Social Class in America*.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Bird, *Social Psychology*, pp. 61-96.

<sup>6</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*.

<sup>7</sup> William H. Burton, *The Nature and Direction of Learning*, p. 306.

<sup>8</sup> Allison Davis, *Intelligence and Cultural Differences*.

<sup>9</sup> Ashley Montagu: *Statement on Race*.

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## **SOCIAL-CLASS VARIATIONS IN THE TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP\***

**Howard S. Becker**

The major problems of workers in the service occupations are likely to be a function of their relationship to their clients or customers, those for whom or on whom the occupational service is performed.<sup>1</sup> Members of such occupations typically have some image of the "ideal" client, and it is in terms of this fiction that they fashion their conceptions of how their work ought to be performed, and their actual work techniques. To the degree that actual clients approximate this ideal the worker will have no "client problem."

In a highly differentiated urban society, however, clients will vary greatly, and ordinarily only some fraction of the total of potential clients will be "good" ones. Workers tend to classify clients in terms of the way in which they vary from this ideal. The fact of client variation from the occupational ideal emphasizes the intimate relation of the institution in which work is carried on to its environing society. If that society does not prepare people to play their client roles in the manner desired by the occupation's members there will be conflicts, and problems for the workers in the performance of their work. One of the major factors affecting the production of suitable clients is the cultural diversity of various social classes in the society. The cultures of particular social-class groups may operate to produce clients who make the worker's position extremely difficult.

We deal here with this problem as it appears in the experience of the functionaries of a large urban educational institution, the Chicago public school system, discussing the way in which teachers in this system observe, classify and react to class-typed differences in the behavior of the children with whom they work. The material to be presented is thus relevant not only to problems of occupational organiza-

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\* This paper is based on research done under a grant from the Committee on Education, Training, and Research in Race Relations of the University of Chicago.



tion but also to the problem of differences in the educational opportunities available to children of various social-classes. Warner, Havighurst and Loeb<sup>2</sup> and Hollingshead<sup>3</sup> have demonstrated the manner in which the schools tend to favor and select out children of the middle classes. Allison Davis has pointed to those factors in the class cultures involved which make lower-class children less and middle-class children more adaptable to the work and behavioral standards of the school.<sup>4</sup> This paper will contribute to knowledge in this area by analyzing the manner in which the public school teacher reacts to these cultural differences and, in so doing, perpetuates the discrimination of our educational system against the lower-class child.

The analysis is based on sixty interviews with teachers in the Chicago system.<sup>5</sup> The interviews were oriented around the general question of the problems of being a teacher and were not specifically directed toward discovering feelings about social-class differences among students. Since these differences created some of the teachers' most pressing problems they were continually brought up by the interviewees themselves. They typically distinguished three social-class groups with which they, as teachers, came in contact: (1) a bottom stratum, probably equivalent to the lower-lower and parts of the upper-lower class; (2) an upper stratum, probably equivalent to the upper-middle class; and (3) a middle stratum, probably equivalent to the lower-middle and parts of the upper-lower class. We will adopt the convention of referring to these groups as lower, upper and middle groups, but it should be understood that this terminology refers to the teachers' classification of students and not to the ordinary sociological description.

We will proceed by taking up the three problems that loomed largest in the teachers' discussion of adjustment to their students: (1) the problem of *teaching* itself, (2) the problem of *discipline*, and (3) the problem of the *moral acceptability* of the students. In each case the variation in the

form of and adjustment to the problem by the characteristics of the children of the various class groups distinguished by teachers is discussed.

# I

A basic problem in any occupation is that of performing one's given task successfully, and where this involves working with human beings their qualities are a major variable affecting the ease with which the work can be done. The teacher considers that she has done her job adequately when she has brought about an observable change in the children's skills and knowledge which she can attribute to her own efforts:

Well, I would say that a teacher is successful when she is putting the material across to the children, when she is getting some response from them. I'll tell you something. Teaching is a very rewarding line of work, because you can see those children grow under your hands. You can see the difference in them after you've had them for five months. You can see where they've started and where they've got to. And it's all yours. It really is rewarding in that way, you can see results and know that it's your work that brought those results about.

She feels that she has a better chance of success in this area when her pupils are interested in attending and working hard in school, and are trained at home in such a way that they are bright and quick at school work. Her problems arise in teaching those groups who do not meet these specifications, for in these cases her teaching techniques, tailored to the "perfect" student, are inadequate to cope with the reality, and she is left with a feeling of having failed in performing her basic task.

Davis has described the orientations toward education in general, and schoolwork in particular, of the lower and middle classes:

Thus, our educational system, which next to the family is the most effective agency in teaching good work habits to middle class people, is largely ineffective and unrealistic with underprivileged groups. Education fails to motivate such workers because our schools and our society both lack *real rewards* to offer underpriv-

ileged groups. Neither lower class children or adults will work hard in school or on the job just to please the teacher or boss. They are not going to learn to be ambitious, to be conscientious, and to study hard, as if school and work were a fine character-building game, which one plays just for the sake of playing. They can see, indeed, that those who work hard at school usually have families that already have the occupations, homes, and social acceptance that the school holds up as the rewards of education. The underprivileged workers can see also that the chances of their getting enough education to make their attainment of these rewards in the future at all probable is very slight. Since they can win the rewards of prestige and social acceptance in their own slum groups without much education, they do not take very seriously the motivation taught by the school.<sup>6</sup>

As these cultural differences produce variations from the image of the "ideal" student, teachers tend to use class terms in describing the children with whom they work.

Children of the lowest group, from slum areas, are characterized as the most difficult group to teach successfully, lacking in interest in school, learning ability, and outside training:

They don't have the right kind of study habits. They can't seem to apply themselves as well. Of course, it's not their fault; they aren't brought up right. After all, the parents in a neighborhood like that really aren't interested.... But, as I say, those children don't learn very quickly. A great many of them don't seem to be really interested in getting an education. I don't think they are. It's hard to get anything done with children like that. They simply don't respond.

In definite contrast are the terms used to describe children of the upper group:

In a neighborhood like this there's something about the children, you just feel like you're accomplishing so much more. You throw an idea out and you can see that it takes hold. The children know what you're talking about and they think about it. Then they come in with projects and pictures and additional information, and it just makes you feel good to see it. They go places and see things, and they know what you're talking about. For instance, you might be teaching social studies or geography.... You bring something up and a child says, "Oh, my parents took me to see that in the museum." You can just do more with material like that.

Ambivalent feelings are aroused by children of the middle group. While motivated to work hard in school they lack the proper out-of-school training:

Well, they're very nice here, very nice. They're not hard to handle. You see, they're taught respect in the home and they're respectful to the teacher. They want to work and do well...Of course, they're not too brilliant. You know what I mean. But they are very nice children and very easy to work with.

In short, the differences between groups make it possible for the teacher to feel successful at her job only with the top group; with the other groups she feels, in greater or lesser measure, that she has failed.

These differences in ability to do school work, as perceived by teachers, have important consequences. They lead, in the first place, to differences in actual teaching techniques. A young high school teacher contrasted the techniques used in "slum" schools with those used in "better" schools:

At S——, there were a lot of guys who were just waiting till they were sixteen so they could get out of school. L——, everybody—well, a very large percentage, I'll say—was going on to secondary school, to college. That certainly made a difference in their classroom work. You had to teach differently at the different schools. For instance, at S——, if you had demonstrations in chemistry they had to be pretty flashy, lots of noise and smoke, before they'd get interested in it. That wasn't necessary at L——. Or at S——if you were having electricity or something like that you had to get the static electricity machine out and have them all stand around and hold hands so that they'd all get a little jolt.

Further, the teacher feels that where these differences are recognized by her superiors there will be a corresponding variation in the amount of work she is expected to accomplish. She expects that the amount of work and effort required of her will vary inversely with the social status of her pupils. This teacher compared schools from the extremes of the class range:

So you have to be on your toes and keep up to where you're supposed to be in the course of study. Now, in a school like the D—— [slum school] you're just not expected to complete all

that work. It's almost impossible. For instance, in the second grade we're supposed to cover nine spelling words a week. Well, I can do that up here at the K—— ["better" school], they can take nine new words a week. But the best class I ever had at the D—— was only able to achieve six words a week and they had to work pretty hard to get that. So I never finished the year's work in spelling. I couldn't. And I really wasn't expected to.

One resultant of this situation—in which less is expected of those teachers whose students are more difficult to teach—is that the problem becomes more aggravated in each grade, as the gap between what the children should know and what they actually do know becomes wider and wider. A principal of such a school describes the degeneration there of the teaching problem into a struggle to get a few basic skills across, in a situation where this cumulative effect makes following the normal program of study impossible:

The children come into our upper grades with very poor reading ability. That means that all the way through our school everybody is concentrating on reading. It's not like at a school like S—— [middle group] where they have science and history and so on. At a school like that they figure that from first to fourth you learn to read and from fifth to eighth you read to learn. You use your reading to learn other material. Well, these children don't reach that second stage while they're with us. We have to plug along getting them to learn to read. Our teachers are pretty well satisfied if the children can read and do simple number work when they leave here. You'll find that they don't think very much of subjects like science, and so on. They haven't got any time for that. They're just trying to get these basic things over. . . . That's why our school is different from one like the S——.

Such consequences of teachers' differential reaction to various class groups obviously operate to further perpetuate those class-cultural characteristics to which they object in the first place.

## II

Discipline is the second of the teacher's major problems with her students. Willard Waller pointed to its basis when he wrote that "Teacher and pupil confront each other in the



school with an original conflict of desires, and however much that conflict may be reduced in amount, or however much it may be hidden, it still remains."<sup>7</sup> We must recognize that conflict, either actual or potential, is ever present in the teacher-pupil relationship, the teacher attempting to maintain her control against the children's efforts to break it.<sup>8</sup> This conflict is felt even with those children who present least difficulty; a teacher who considered her pupils models of good behavior nevertheless said:

But there's that tension all the time. Between you and the students. It's hard on your nerves. Teaching is fun, if you enjoy your subject, but it's the discipline that keeps your nerves on edge, you know what I mean? There's always that tension. Sometimes people say, "Oh, you teach school. That's an easy job, just sitting around all day long." They don't know what it's really like. It's hard on your nerves.

The teacher is tense because she fears that she will lose control, which she tends to define in terms of some line beyond which she will not allow the children to go. Wherever she may draw this line (and there is considerable variation), the teacher feels that she has a "discipline" problem when the children attempt to push beyond it. The form and intensity of this problem are felt to vary from one social-class group to another, as might be expected from Davis' description of class emphases on aggression:

In general, middle-class aggression is taught to adolescents in the form of social and economic skills which will enable them to compete effectively at that level....In lower-class families, physical aggression is as much a normal, socially approved and socially inculcated type of behavior as it is in frontier communities.<sup>9</sup>

These differences in child training are matched by variation in the teachers' reactions.

Children in "slum" schools are considered most difficult to control, being given to unrestrained behavior and physical violence. The interviews are filled with descriptions of such difficulties. Miriam Wagenschein, in a parallel study of the beginning school teacher, gave this summary of the experiences of these younger teachers in lower-class schools:

The reports which these teachers give of what *can* be done by a group of children are nothing short of amazing. A young white teacher walked into her new classroom and was greeted with the comment, "Another damn white one." Another was "rushed" at her desk by the entire class when she tried to be extremely strict with them. Teachers report having been bitten, tripped, and pushed on the stairs. Another gave an account of a second grader throwing a milk bottle at the teacher and of a first grader having such a temper tantrum that it took the principal and two policemen to get him out of the room. In another school following a fight on the playground, the principal took thirty-two razor blades from children in a first grade room. Some teachers indicated fear that they might be attacked by irate persons in the neighborhoods in which they teach. Other teachers report that their pupils carry long pieces of glass and have been known to threaten other pupils with them, while others jab each other with hypodermic needles. One boy got angry with his teacher and knocked in the fender of her car.<sup>19</sup>

In these schools a major part of the teacher's time must be devoted to discipline; as one said: "It's just a question of keeping them in line." This emphasis on discipline detracts from the school's primary function of teaching, thus discriminating, in terms of available educational opportunity, against the children of these schools.

Children of the middle group are thought of as docile, and with them the teacher has least difficulty with discipline:

Those children were much quieter, easier to work with. When we'd play our little games there was never any commotion. That was a very nice school to work in. Everything was quite nice about it. The children were easy to work with....

Children of the upper group are felt hard to handle in some respects, and are often termed "spoiled," "overindulged," or "neurotic"; they do not play the role of the child in the submissive manner teachers consider appropriate. One interviewee, speaking of this group, said:

I think most teachers prefer not to teach in that type of school. The children are more pampered and, as we say, more inclined to run the school for themselves. The parents are very much at fault. The children are not used to taking orders at home and naturally they won't take them at school either.

Teachers develop methods of dealing with these discipline problems, and these tend to vary between social-class groups as do the problems themselves. The basic device used by successful disciplinarians is to establish authority clearly on the first meeting with the class:

You can't ever let them get the upper hand on you or you're through. So I start out tough. The first day I get a new class in, I let them know who's boss... You've got to start off tough, then you can ease up as you go along. If you start out easy-going, when you try to get tough they'll just look at you and laugh.

Having once established such a relation, it is considered important that the teacher be consistent in her behavior so that the children will continue to respect and obey her:

I let them know I mean business. That's one thing you must do. Say nothing that you won't follow through on. Some teachers will say anything to keep kids quiet, they'll threaten anything. Then they can't or won't carry out their threats. Naturally, the children won't pay any attention to them after that. You must never say anything that you won't back up.

In the difficult "slum" schools, teachers feel the necessity of using stern measures, up to and including physical violence (nominally outlawed):

Technically you're not supposed to lay a hand on a kid. Well, they don't, technically. But there are a lot of ways of handling a kid so that it doesn't show—and then it's the teacher's word against the kid's, so the kid hasn't got a chance. Like dear Mrs.——. She gets mad at a kid, she takes him out in the hall. She gets him stood up against the wall. Then she's got a way of chucking the kid under the chin, only hard, so that it knocks his head back against the wall. It doesn't leave a mark on him. But when he comes back in that room he can hardly see straight, he's so knocked out. It's really rough. There's a lot of little tricks like that that you learn about.

Where such devices are not used, there is recourse to violent punishment, "tongue lashings." All teachers, however, are not emotionally equipped for such behavior and must find other means:

The worst thing I can do is lose my temper and start raving... You've got to believe in that kind of thing in order for it to work... If you don't honestly believe it it shows up and the children know you don't mean it and it doesn't do any good any-

way....I try a different approach myself. Whenever they get too rowdy I go to the piano and...play something and we have rhythms or something until they sort of settle down...That's what we call "softsoaping" them. It seems to work for me. It's about the only thing I can do.

Some teachers may also resort to calling in the parents, a device whose usefulness is limited by the fact that such summonses are most frequently ignored. The teacher's disciplinary power in such a school is also limited by her fear of retaliation by the students: "Those fellows are pretty big, and I just think it would take a bigger person than me to handle them. I certainly wouldn't like to try."

In the school with children of the middle group no strong sanctions are required, mild reprimands sufficing:

Now the children at Z—— here are quite nice to teach. They're pliable, yes, that's the word, they're pliable. They will go along with you on things and not fight you. You can take them any place and say to them, "I'm counting on you not to disgrace your school. Let's see that Z—— spirit." And they'll behave for you.... They can be frightened, they have fear in them. They're pliable, flexible, you can do things with them. They're afraid of their parents and what they'll do to them if they get into trouble at school. And they're afraid of the administration. They're afraid of being sent down to the principal. So that they can be handled.

Children of the upper group often act in a way which may be interpreted as "misbehavior" but which does not represent a conscious attack on the teacher's authority. Many teachers are able to disregard such activity by interpreting it as a natural concomitant of the "brightness" and "intelligence" of such children. Where such an interpretation is not possible the teachers feel hampered by a lack of effective sanctions:

I try different things like keeping them out of a gym period or a recess period. But that doesn't always work. I have this one little boy who just didn't care when I used those punishments. He said he didn't like gym anyway. I don't know what I'm going to do with him.

The teacher's power in such schools is further limited by the fact that the children are able to mobilize their influential parents so as to exert a large degree of control over the actions of school personnel.

It should be noted, finally, that discipline problems tend to become less important as the length of the teacher's stay in a particular school makes it possible for her to build a reputation which coerces the children into behaving without attempting any test of strength:<sup>11</sup>

I have no trouble with the children. Once you establish a reputation and they know what to expect, they respect you and you have no trouble. Of course, that's different for a new teacher, but when you're established that's no problem at all.

### III

The third area of problems has been termed that of *moral acceptability*, and arises from the fact that some actions of one's potential clients may be offensive in terms of some deeply felt set of moral standards; these clients are thus morally unacceptable. Teachers find that some of their pupils act in such a way as to make themselves unacceptable in terms of the moral values centered around health and cleanliness, sex and aggression, ambition and work, and the relations of age groups.

Children of the middle group present no problem at this level, being universally described as clean, well dressed, moderate in their behavior, and hard working. Children from the "better" neighborhoods are considered deficient in the important moral traits of politeness and respect for elders:

Where the children come from wealthy homes. That's not so good either. They're not used to doing work at home. They have maids and servants of all kinds and they're used to having things done for them, instead of doing them themselves. . . . They won't do anything. For instance, if they drop a piece of cloth on the floor, they'll just let it lay, they wouldn't think of bending over to pick it up. That's janitor's work to them. As a matter of fact, one of them said to me once: "If I pick that up there wouldn't be any work for the janitor to do." Well, it's pretty difficult to deal with children like that.

Further, they are regarded as likely to transgress what the teachers define as moral boundaries in the matter of smoking and drinking; it is particularly shocking that such "nice" children should have such vices.



It is, however, the "slum" child who most deeply offends the teacher's moral sensibilities; in almost every area mentioned above these children, by word, action or appearance, manage to give teachers the feeling that they are immoral and not respectable. In terms of physical appearance and condition they disgust and depress the middle-class teacher. Even this young woman, whose emancipation from conventional morality is symbolized in her habitual use of the argot of the jazz musician, was horrified by the absence of the toothbrush from the lives of her lower-class students:

It's just horribly depressing, you know. I mean, it just gets you down. I'll give you an example. A kid complained of a toothache one day. Well, I thought I could take a look and see if I could help him or something so I told him to open his mouth. I almost wiggled when I saw his mouth. His teeth were all rotten, every one of them. Just filthy and rotten. Man, I mean, I was really shocked, you know. I said, "Don't you have a toothbrush?" He said no, they were only his baby teeth and Ma said he didn't need a toothbrush for that. So I really got upset and looked in all their mouths. Man, I never saw anything like it. They were all like that, practically. I asked how many had toothbrushes, and about a quarter of them had them. Boy, that's terrible. And I don't dig that crap about baby teeth either, because they start getting molars when they're six, I know that. So I gave them a talking to, but what good does it do? The kid's mouth was just rotten. They never heard of a toothbrush or going to a dentist.

These children, too, are more apt than the other groups to be dishonest in some way that will get them into trouble with law enforcement officials. The early (by middle-class standards) sexual maturity of such children is quite upsetting to the teacher:

One thing about these girls is, well, some of them are not very nice girls. One girl in my class I've had two years now. She makes her money on the side as a prostitute. She's had several children.... This was a disturbing influence on the rest of the class.

Many teachers reported great shock on finding that words which were innocent to them had obscene meanings for their lower-class students:

I decided to read them a story one day. I started reading them "Puss in Boots" and they just burst out laughing. I couldn't understand what I had said that had made them burst out like that.

I went back over the story and tried to find out what it might be. I couldn't see anything that would make them laugh. I couldn't see anything at all in the story. Later one of the other teachers asked me what had happened. She was one of the older teachers. I told her that I didn't know; that I was just reading them a story and they thought it was extremely funny. She asked me what story I read them and I told her "Puss in the Boots." She said, "Oh, I should have warned you not to read that one." It seems that Puss means something else to them. It means something awful—I wouldn't even tell you what. It doesn't mean a thing to us.<sup>12</sup>

Warner, Havighurst and Loeb note that "unless the middle-class values change in America, we must expect the influence of the schools to favor the values of material success, individual striving, thrift, and social mobility."<sup>13</sup> Here again, the "slum" child violates the teacher's moral sense by failing to display these virtues:

Many of these children don't realize the worth of an education. They have no desire to improve themselves. And they don't care much about school and schoolwork as a result. That makes it very difficult to teach them.

That kind of problem is particularly bad in a school like \_\_\_\_\_. That's not a very privileged school. It's very under-privileged, as a matter of fact. So we have a pretty tough element there, a bunch of bums, I might as well say it. That kind you can't reach at all. They don't want to be there at all, and so you can't do anything with them. And even many of the others—they're simply indifferent to the advantages of education. So they're indifferent, they don't care about their homework.

This behavior of the lower-class child is all the more repellent to the teacher because she finds it incomprehensible; she cannot conceive that any normal human being would act in such a way. This teacher stresses the anxiety aroused in the inexperienced teacher by her inability to provide herself with a rational explanation for her pupils' behavior:

We had one of the girls who just came to the school last year and she used to come and talk to me quite a bit. I know that it was just terrible for her. You know, I don't think she'd ever had anything to do with Negroes before she got there and she was just mystified, didn't know what to do. She was bewildered. She came to me one day almost in tears and said, "But they don't want to learn, they don't even want to learn. Why is that?" Well, she had me there.

It is worth noting that the behavior of the "better" children,

even when morally unacceptable, is less distressing to the teacher, who feels that, in this case, she can produce a reasonable explanation for the behavior. An example of such an explanation is the following:

I mean, they're spoiled, you know. A great many of them are only children. Naturally, they're used to having their own way, and they don't like to be told what to do. Well, if a child is in a room that I'm teaching he's going to be told what to do, that's all there is to it. Or if they're not spoiled that way, they're the second child and they never got the affection the first one did, not that their mother didn't love them, but they didn't get as much affection, so they're not so easy to handle either.

#### IV

We have shown that school teachers experience problems in working with their students to the degree that those students fail to exhibit in reality the qualities of the image of the ideal pupil which teachers hold. In a stratified urban society there are many groups whose life-style and culture produce children who do not meet the standards of this image, and who are thus impossible for teachers like these to work with effectively. Programs of action intended to increase the educational opportunities of the under-privileged in our society should take account of the manner in which teachers interpret and react to the cultural traits of this group, and the institutional consequences of their behavior.<sup>14</sup> Such programs might profitably aim at producing teachers who can cope effectively with the problems of teaching this group and not, by their reactions to class differences, perpetuate the existing inequities.

A more general statement of the findings is now in order. Professionals depend on their envioning society to provide them with clients who meet the standards of their image of the ideal client. Social class cultures, among other factors, may operate to produce many clients who, in one way or another, fail to meet these specifications and therefore aggravate one or another of the basic problems of the worker-client relation (three were considered in this paper).

In attacking this problem we touch on one of the basic elements of the relation between institutions and society,

for the differences between ideal and reality place in high relief the implicit assumptions which institutions, through their functionaries, make about the society around them. All institutions have embedded in them some set of assumptions about the nature of the society and the individuals with whom they deal, and we must get at these assumptions, and their embodiment in actual social interaction, in order fully to understand these organizations. We can, perhaps, best begin our work on this problem by studying those institutions which, like the school, make assumptions which have high visibility because of their variation from reality.

<sup>1</sup> See Howard S. Becker, "The Professional Dance Musician and His Audience," *American Journal of Sociology*, LVII (September, 1951), pp. 136-144 for further discussion of this point.

<sup>2</sup> W. L. Warner, R. J. Havighurst, and W. J. Loeb, *Who Shall Be Educated?* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1944.)

<sup>3</sup> August Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1949).

<sup>4</sup> Allison Davis, *Social-Class Influences Upon Learning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950).

<sup>5</sup> The entire research has been reported in Howard S. Becker, "Role and Career Problems of the Chicago Public School Teacher," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1951).

<sup>6</sup> Allison Davis, "The Motivation of the Underprivileged Worker," *Industry and Society*, ed. William F. Whyte (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1947), p. 99.

<sup>7</sup> Willard Waller, *Sociology of Teaching* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1932), p. 197.

<sup>8</sup> Although all service occupations tend to have such problems of control over their clients, the problem is undoubtedly aggravated in situations like the school where those upon whom the service is being performed are not there of their own volition, but rather because of the wishes of some other group (the parents, in this case).

<sup>9</sup> Allison Davis, *Social-Class Influence Upon Learning*, pp. 34-5.

<sup>10</sup> Miriam Wagenschein, "Reality Shock" (Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1950), pp. 58-9.

<sup>11</sup> This is part of the process of job adjustment described in detail in Howard S. Becker, "The Career of the Chicago Public School Teacher," *American Journal of Sociology*, LVII (March, 1952).

<sup>12</sup> Interview by Miriam Wagenschein. The lack of common meanings in this situation symbolizes the great cultural and moral distance between teacher and "slum" child.

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 172.

<sup>14</sup> One of the important institutional consequences of these class preferences is a constant movement of teachers away from lower-class schools, which prevents these schools from retaining experienced teachers and from maintaining some continuity in teaching and administration.

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## WISHES OF NEGRO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS and SOCIAL CLASS STATUS<sup>1</sup>

Benjamin F. Smith

Negroes and whites in the South are subject to the same general influences of the culture originating from allegiance to the same Federal law, observance of the same form of marriage, and striving to conform to the same professional standards of conduct. However, in addition to the general influences, the Negro is subject to a series of specific influences deriving from the fact that he constitutes a socially recognized group whose participation in the general culture of the community is severely restricted by the color-caste system.<sup>2</sup> All Negroes from birth are automatically members of the Negro caste and are separated in area of residence from the white caste and are separated in area of legal and extra legal sanction, this dividing line ceases to be imaginary in the mind of the southern Negro. He recognizes and accommodates himself to the division. The practical operation of such a system is the creation of two distinct communities within one. Within each community, there are class divisions—Upper, Middle, and Lower.<sup>3</sup> The social class system within a southern community, therefore, is a double structure—Negro and white. Each system provides for upward and downward social mobility for its members. The social division is protected by placing a taboo on marriage between members of the two castes; by providing a social classification of occupations and by giving the system legal and social approval. The ultimate effect of the system is that it provides the white child with experiences which make him feel superior to all Negro children, whatever their class. The Negro child, on the other hand, be-

<sup>1</sup> The data reported in this paper were gathered in connection with, but not reported in, *A Critical Analysis of the Relationship Between Occupational Goals, Social Adjustment and Social Class Status of Negro High School Seniors*. (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, New York University, 1951).

<sup>2</sup> John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937).

<sup>3</sup> Allison Davis, Burleigh, B. and Mary Gardner, *Deep South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940).



gins to formulate a feeling about himself as inferior in privileges and possibilities.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the caste system, which acts as a ceiling for the Negro child, limiting and constricting the ambitions, serves in lesser fashion, as a delimiting factor for the white child. In this connection, Myrdal documents the fact that the Negro in the south occupies a position in the social structure which eliminates him from competing for privileges, prestige duties, obligations and opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

Studies of the influences of social class upon the development of the individual within society have pointed out that class position determines cultural behavior to a large extent. As Murray has aptly put it:

Social class largely conditions the child's social learning because it limits his social and economic environment, and determines largely both his social stimuli and the models to be initiated.<sup>6</sup>

Social class, then, regulates the nature and extent of learning. The caste system determines the limits to which this learning may be put into practice. In this way, the two systems working together serve to motivate goal striving behavior. The goals, attitudes, wishes and expectations are conditioned by the social structure.<sup>7</sup>

### THE PROBLEM STATED

In view of the foregoing, the chief objective of this study is to discover the relationship between the written wishes and social class status of urban Negro high school seniors. The seniors are chosen from the following schools: Hillside High School, Durham, N. C.; Second Ward High School and West Charlotte High School, Charlotte, N. C.;

<sup>4</sup> Charles S. Johnson, *Growing Up in the Black Belt* (Washington, D. C., American Council on Education, 1941).

<sup>5</sup> Gurnor Myrdal, *An American Delimma; The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1941).

<sup>6</sup> Walter I. Murray, "The Concept of Social Class and Its Implications for Teachers," *Journal of Negro Education*, 20 (1951) p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Neal E. Miller and John Dollard, *Social Learning and Imitation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941).

Maggie L. Walker and Armstrong High Schools, Richmond, Virginia. This investigation is limited to those students who were classified as seniors by the high schools in each of the three cities. These students were currently enrolled in school and were attending classes during the school year 1950-1951. The one-year time span seemed expedient to insure constancy in the student group studied.

### THE PROCEDURE

Social status was determined by an adaptation of Warner's *Index of Social Characteristics*. The data were secured directly from the heads of the family of each student.

The socio-economic data sheet for each family was submitted to three competently trained sociologists who reviewed the data and assessed the social class status. In ranking the families according to social class status, complete agreement was required among the three sociologists. The sociologists agreed that the 265 seniors included 13 upper middle, 43 lower middle, 95 upper lower, and 114 lower class individuals.

The data pertaining to the wishes of the 265 seniors included in this study were secured from question eighty-nine on the *Washburne Social Adjustment Inventory*. The Inventory was administered by the author to the English 4 class (senior English). The instructions were: "What are your three chief wishes? In other words, if you could have any three wishes, but only three, come true, what would they be? The only thing you cannot wish for is more wishes."

The replies were analyzed and all related answers were grouped together. Instances in which the three answers were simply restatements of the same idea, the three were counted as one. The final total of specific wishes was 687. Through continued revision all wishes that had a common

element were grouped under broad subject headings. The written answers divided themselves among wishes for (1) social welfare, (2) family welfare, (3) material possessions, (4) improved personal appearance, (5) vocations, (6) education, (7) marriage and the family, and (8) personal happiness.

Two trained educational psychologists reviewed the data and similarly grouped the replies in each category. Their analysis agreed with the author's classification. Thus, a higher degree of validity was assured.

### THE FINDINGS

The important features of the findings are exhibited in table 1. The near even spread of the upper middle class and the tendency of the two lower classes to emphasize material possession and education should first be noted. The desire for material things and education increase perceptibly from the upper middle to the lower lower class. The value of chi square computed for these data is 47.941. According to R. A. Fisher's table of chi square values, the value of chi square for 21 degrees of freedom and P of 0.01 is 38.932. Since the value of chi square in this instance is much larger, we conclude that the difference between wishes of individuals in the various classes is too great to be attributed to random errors of sampling. It is a true difference. The wishes of

TABLE 1

*Distribution of Wishes of 265 Negro High School Seniors Among Eight Categories in the Different Social Classes.*

Categories	U. M.	L. M.	U. L.	L. L.	All Classes
Social Welfare	5	7	18	19	49
Family Welfare	5	6	17	22	50
Material Possession	7	26	58	96	187
Education	5	32	57	46	140
Vocation	7	23	53	43	126
Marriage and Family		11	29	20	60
Personal Happiness		5	12	10	27
Personal Appearances	10	5	13	20	48
	<hr/> 39	<hr/> 115	<hr/> 257	<hr/> 276	<hr/> 687

the two lower classes differ significantly from the wishes of the two upper classes.

It is interesting to note that the upper middle class senior is proportionally more concerned about personal appearance than any of the other classes—29 per cent as compared to 6, 7, and 9 per cent. Since the vast majority of individuals included in this study were between the ages 14-19, maturational factors cannot be said to influence the upper class more than either of the three other classes. We might, therefore, attribute this desire to be a manifestation of class teachings. It is common knowledge that the upper class Negro family places great emphasis upon what is considered by them to be good public behavior and personal appearance.

The question naturally arises as to whether, if the unrealistic wishes were discarded, the relationship would be different. Tables 2-5 present the specific wishes. In the main, these seniors show an awareness of reality.

TABLE 2

*Percentage Distribution by Class of Wishes of 265 Negro High School Seniors Concerning Social Welfare.*

Upper	Middle	per cent	Lower	Middle	per cent	Upper	Lower	per cent	Lower	Lower	per cent
Peace in World	.40		Peace in World	.58		Peace in World	.28		Segregation		
Make town a			Help race	.14		Segregation			ended		.30
better place	.20		War ended	.14		ended	.28		World Peace		.21
Serve race	.20		Opportunity for			Negroes love			War ended		.16
Improve living			Negroes	.14		each other	.11		Better Negro		
conditions of						Help race	.11		relations		.11
others	.20					Help others	.10		Credit to race		.11
						War ended	.06		Peace in		
						Open a school	.06		neighborhood		.11
Total		100			100			100			100

From table 2 it can be clearly seen that the two lower classes are more concerned about race segregation. On the other hand, the two upper classes are concerned more about world conditions. It appears, therefore, that each group is concerned about world affairs to the extent that they have a stock in them. The two lower classes receive the blunt end of racial segregation.

TABLE 3

*Percentage Distribution by Class of Wishes of 265 Negro High School Seniors Concerning Family Welfare.*

Upper Middle	per cent	Lower Middle	per cent	Upper Lower	per cent	Lower Lower	per cent
Help parents	.40	Help mother	.33	Family happy	.23	Care of parents	.32
Long life for mother	.60	Parents' health	.33	Home for mother	.18	Parents happy	.24
		Aunt's health	.17	Help family	.12	Sister finish college	.05
		Grandfather live forever	.17	Help mother	.11	Parents live long	.14
				Live with family	.06	Family together	.05
				Family success	.12	Father's job better	.05
				Harmony in family	.12	Home for family	.05
				Love parents	.06	Help family	.05
						Health for family	.05
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

The desire to be of service to parents is of first importance to the upper middle, lower middle, and lower lower classes. The upper lower class emphasizes family happiness. However, the two lower classes are more conscious of their living conditions than the two upper classes. The wishes of these seniors reflect the experiences as members of the family and culture complexes. Table 4 shows clearly the operation of living conditions upon the desires.

TABLE 4

*Percentage Distribution of Wishes of 265 Negro High School Seniors Concerning Material Possessions.*

Upper Middle	per cent	Lower Middle	per cent	Upper Lower	per cent	Lower Lower	per cent
Money	.58	Money	.46	Home	.45	Home	.39
Home	.14	Home	.23	Money	.25	Money	.29
Car	.14	Car	.23	Car	.21	Car	.26
Clothes	.14	Clothes	.04	Clothes	.06	Clothes	.04
		Everything	.04	Fine Things	.03	Piano	.01
						Food	.01
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

Money occupies first place in the desires of upper and lower middle class seniors, comprising 58 and 46 per cent of replies. The upper and lower lower classes are more concerned about owning a home. The desire for a car and clothes maintains the same position in all classes. These data seem to support the conclusion that environmental factors



are the determinants beyond innate capacity of desires and aspirations. These lower class youth are desiring a new experience which at present they can only imagine.

TABLE 5

*Percentage Distribution of 265 Negro High School Seniors Concerning Education.*

Upper Middle	per cent	Lower Middle	per cent	Upper Lower	per cent	Lower Lower	per cent
College	.75	College	.56	College	.72	College	.72
Beyond College	.25	Beyond College	.09	Finish H. S.	.28	Finish H. S.	.28
		Finish H.S.	.35				
Total	100		100		100		100

Table 5 indicates that 60 per cent of the lower lower class and 28 per cent of the upper class wish to terminate their educational careers with the completion of high school. To the teacher of Negro secondary school youth, this is significant because such a low educational aspiration pattern might well be the key to low motivation for study. The high percentage of drop-outs among the lower classes may be a function of this aspiration pattern. The high per cent of desires to attend college is understandable in light of the fact that these students were in their last year of high school. The next logical step would be college.

The written wishes concerning vocations were positively correlated with class. There was a larger percentage of upper middle and lower middle seniors aspiring to professional jobs than was true of the two lower classes. The lower classes were indefinite about their vocations. They wished for "good jobs." Of those desiring professional jobs: 58 per cent were upper middle; 62 per cent were lower middle; 34 per cent were upper lower; 32 per cent were lower lower class. However, when a specific vocation was mentioned, there seemed to be an expressed desire to escape from present status.

The wishes concerning marriage and family relations shared a common element—to get married, to have a happy home with a good wife (or husband) and children. The upper middle expressed no concern in this area. This ab-

sence of written wishes may be due to the limited number of cases in this class group.

The upper middle class senior registered no desire for personal happiness and pleasures. The desire for travel was listed more often by the lower middle and the two lower classes. Other wishes in this category were of a miscellaneous type, such as (1) The Middle class: to be with boy friend, participate in sports, to be happy; (2) Upper lower: to have happiness, to have long happy life, to enjoy life, to have fun, to have good luck, to be contented; (3) lower lower: to be happy, to have no troubles or worries, to see school win football game.

All classes are concerned about personal appearance and personality. The middle classes are more concerned about appearance as indicated by the wish for beautiful figure and to be beautiful. The lower classes were more concerned about having friends and being healthy and strong. The most frequent recurrent wish in this category for the upper middle class was the desire to be beautiful (or handsome, or pretty). This desire may be a yearning to escape from the identifying skin color and hair texture. Skin color and hair texture are the commonly identifying racial characteristics. The preoccupation of the Negro with changing these racial characteristics is clearly demonstrated by his frequent visits to beauty parlors. The pressing of hair is one attempt to approximate in hair texture the accepted American standard of beauty.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The chief objective of this study has been to discover the relationship between written wishes and social status of urban Negro high school seniors. The evidence used to solve the problem was gathered from a sample of 265 seniors chosen from the Negro high schools in Durham and Charlotte, North Carolina, and Richmond, Virginia.

The findings revealed a close association between desires of Negro high school seniors and social class. The relation-

ship was significant at the 0.01 per cent level of confidence. The areas of greatest difference were material possessions and education.

### SIGNIFICANCE FOR EDUCATION

The evidence presented in this study points up the fact that environment plays a great part in determining the nature and extent of adolescent's concerns. It is safe, therefore, to conclude that the concerns of youth are acquired. They are largely social learnings. Ideals, hopes, wishes, interests, and attitudes are picked up through membership in a neighborhood, a family, a social group. In other words, they are class teachings. Before teachers can motivate these youngsters to develop interest patterns for the realization of their varied potentialities, they must first understand the psycho-sociological teachings to which each has been exposed. The teacher will need to know the students' ideas of accepted and non-accepted behavior, social class definitions of life-problems, class definitions of words, cultural concepts toward reward and punishment and the values placed upon education by the culture.

The wishes of Negro adolescents should be used as guides to learning activities and experiences through which the individual can gain a wholesome conception of self. This will involve: (1) aiding students to identify their roles in a democratic society as a member of a minority group, and as a contributing participant in the social, civic, religious and economic life of their community; (2) assisting the students to understand the demands and shortcomings which will be placed upon them as they accept these roles, and (3) helping them to acquire techniques which will aid in minority survival and social upward mobility.

The evidence presented in this study, also, indicates that those who are engaged in the training of Negro youth should commit themselves to developing curricula based upon the needs of the individual student. For instance, sixty per cent of the lower lower class are concerned about fin-

ishing high school. They indicate no desire for further training. This desire may be a result of unpleasant experiences while in high school or the realization that either ability or financial support will not permit them to achieve further in this area. A school program which utilizes the special abilities and talents of individuals will aid in the discovery of the proper roles to undertake and will create new interests. The school program, then, should make provisions for many and varied types of interest patterns. The opportunity to try out and enjoy some of the experiences not common in the class culture will enable the students to develop ambitions in keeping with their abilities and talents.

It may be added that expressed wishes are excellent indices of student goals and values. The teacher who understands and accepts these wishes, shallow though they may sometimes appear, is in a strategic position. He can (1) aid the student in setting worthy goals and purposes, (2) assist the student in finding socially approved ways of realizing his goals and (3) motivate the student by constantly pointing up the relationship between the school's curriculum and the realization of the student's wishes.

It is perhaps needless to state that this is no mean task. The teacher who seeks to use wishes as a basis for his curriculum must know his students. He must be familiar with their backgrounds, sympathetic with their deviations from his own middle class behavior, and flexible in his requirements. In other words, he must teach individuals.

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## **SOCIAL MOBILITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Raymond A. Mulligan**

Relatively few studies have been made of social mobility in the United States within the last three decades. The available studies on this subject have investigated such aspects of social mobility as: The chances a worker has of being promoted to an executive or a managerial position,<sup>1</sup> the economic starting point of American millionaires,<sup>2</sup> occupational succession in families,<sup>3</sup> and trends in the socio-economic distribution of the nation's labor force.<sup>4</sup> Many have assumed that upward social mobility is a general tendency operating on all social class levels at the same rate of speed. It has been found that social mobility, instead of being a general tendency, varies for certain social classes in time and place.<sup>5</sup>

Studies on the subjective aspects of social mobility have revealed that: (1) Individuals with such marked qualities as aggressiveness, drive and self-interest tend to move into managerial positions more rapidly than others; (2) sales managers on the whole seem to display more forcefulness than ordinary salesmen; (3) individuals with personalities characterized by willingness to conform to accepted standards, along with self-confidence, emotional control, and other traits are more likely to move upward economically and occupationally than others; and (4) the success or failure of executives in large business enterprises is partly determined by the presence or absence of a "mobility drive."<sup>6</sup>

The accumulation of wealth, the possession of outstanding talent, beauty or handsomeness, personal achievement, and educational attainment are said to be some of the means by which an individual may improve his social position. However, of all the possible means of vertical mobility, education has been declared to be the most populous and easiest avenue of upward mobility in our society today.<sup>7</sup> If this assumption is valid a study of enrollment trends and the the social origins of students in institutions of higher learn-



ing should contribute to our knowledge of an important phase of social mobility in this country. In the present paper, the writer shall attempt to study social mobility through higher education by: (1) Analyzing college enrollment trends, and (2) examining studies on the social origins of students in institutions of higher learning.

### COLLEGE ENROLLMENT TRENDS

In proportion to population growth, and in absolute numbers, enrollment in our institutions of higher learning has increased greatly in the last seventy to eighty years. In 1870, according to various estimates, approximately 50,000 to 60,000 students were enrolled in colleges out of a total population for the United States of 39,904,000. By 1900 college enrollments had increased to 237,592 students and the population to 76,129,000; in 1940 some 1,500,000 students out of a population of 131,949,000 were enrolled in college; and in 1949 it is estimated some 2,500,000 students out of an approximated population of 150,000,000 were found in college. From 1870 to 1949 the general population of the nation increased by less than fourfold and college enrollments multiplied approximately fifty times.<sup>8</sup> However, it should be noted that post-war college enrollments were increased abnormally by students who either had their college educations postponed or interrupted during the war years, and by many returning veterans, many of whom undoubtedly would never have been able to attend college without the G. I. Bill of Rights. The year 1940 rather than 1949 in comparison with 1870 would thus be more likely to yield normal trends in college enrollments. Such a comparison results in a population increase of better than threefold for the period between 1870 and 1940, while during the same period college enrollments increased approximately thirty times.

The growth of college enrollment is also indicated in the following findings. In 1910 sixty-seven individuals out of every thousand in the United States entered college or a

similar institution. By 1938 one hundred and fifty persons out of every thousand attained this educational level.<sup>9</sup> Between 1910 and 1938 college enrollments increased by over one hundred per cent, whereas the population increase for this same period was only approximately 38 per cent.

In the twenty-five years between the two World Wars the proportion of college graduates among white American military selectees doubled, while the general population experienced an increase of only 21 per cent. Five per cent of all World War I white males selected for military service attained a college level of education, whereas 11 per cent of the selectees in World War II reached this same level.<sup>10</sup>

The increase in college enrollments shows similar upward trends as measured by the proportion of students in the age group of eighteen to twenty-four. In 1900 four per cent of this age group were enrolled in institutions of higher learning. By 1930 over 12 per cent were enrolled, and in 1940 sixteen per cent were enrolled.

The above statistics present a picture of an ever-increasing proportion of our population attending college. However, on the basis of this evidence it would be premature and injudicious to conclude that a direct ratio exists between the size of college enrollments and the magnitude of upward social mobility through higher education in the United States. The evidence may also indicate, or for that matter only indicate, that: (1) Educational mobility is increasing in this country; (2) more and more upper class families are sending their children to college; (3) certain occupational pursuits are now calling for advanced education; or (4) our institutions of higher learning have added to their traditional functions activities that were formerly carried on in other social institutions. C. Wright Mills claims that higher education increasingly does not insure a high salary, better occupational positions, security, or high social prestige as there is a decreasing need for higher education and skill in white-collar jobs.<sup>12</sup> The relative value of a college education appears to be diminishing, since the

long-term trend in many professional and semi-professional fields is one of overcrowding and uncertain earnings.<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly social mobility has taken place and is continuing to occur through higher education, but to assume that everyone who attends or graduates from college is bettering his class position is unwarranted.

A truer picture of the situation appears to be that social mobility through higher education is a function of socio-economic background. In other words, the significance of a higher education as a social levator is relative to socio-economic background. For example, a college education for the son of an unskilled laborer might almost be a guarantee of vertical mobility; for the son of a school teacher a guarantee of at least social continuity or horizontal mobility; and for the son of a banker have no more significance than that of a social grace. A propos to the last point, Hollingshead<sup>14</sup> found in his study that the upper class did not highly regard education, either as a tool for a career or for knowledge in itself. In Elmtown, only about half of the boys and a third of the girls from the upper class graduated from institutions of higher learning.

If the assumption is granted that social mobility through higher education is a function of socio-economic background it follows that of the two broad socio-economic groups, white collar (professional, business, and clerical), and blue collar (skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled), the latter is the one most likely to experience social mobility through higher education. The degree to which this type of social mobility is occurring in this country can be approximated by studying the social origins of students in institutions of higher learning.

#### **SOCIAL ORIGINS AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

In the last thirty years, several studies have been made of the social origins of students attending public and private junior colleges, liberal arts colleges, teachers' colleges, and state universities. However, one has to exercise caution in

making generalizations from these studies as: (1) They were made over a wide range of years; (2) the methods used for the collection of data were not uniform; (3) in most cases a standard scale for the socio-economic grouping of gainful workers was not available or used; and (4) the institutions involved and their community settings differed as to type and size. Nevertheless, in reviewing these studies one salient factor stands out. The lower or blue collar classes (skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled) were found to be greatly under-represented in all institutions of higher learning.

One of the earliest of these studies was made by Koos<sup>15</sup> in 1921-22. He found that students from the upper classes were heavily over-represented and the lower classes under-represented in sixteen public junior colleges, seven private junior colleges, three liberal arts colleges, one state university, and one private university.

A study of all pupils in regular attendance at the Lyons Township High School, La Grange, Illinois, from September, 1923 to June, 1925, was made by Towell.<sup>16</sup> Although the official records of the high school showed that 70.0 per cent of the graduates attended college the upper classes were over-represented and the lower classes under-represented. In fact, unskilled labor and the personal- and public-service groups had no representatives in college.

Reynolds<sup>17</sup> in a study of fifty-five public and private junior colleges, liberal arts colleges, and state universities found that approximately three-fourths of the students' fathers were engaged in proprietary, agricultural, professional, and managerial service. As in the studies mentioned above the lower classes were poorly represented.

Potthoff's<sup>18</sup> study of students who entered the University of Chicago as freshmen in October, 1924, is much more manageable in scope. He was interested in determining the extent to which the various occupational groups comprising the population of Chicago were represented among the students whose homes were in that city.

This investigation revealed that the upper classes combined had more than four times as many representatives in the university's freshman enrollment than the lower classes, although the latter combination was twice as numerous in the general population of Chicago as the former. Approximately 42 per cent of the students came from the proprietary class, a group which comprised 7.8 per cent of the general population. The professional class was represented by 18.6 per cent of the freshman students, and made up only 5.1 per cent of the city's population. Whereas 16.1 per cent of Chicago's population fell into the unskilled labor group only one student came from this class.

In a study of 1,080 women students in fifteen teachers' colleges it was found that the parents of these students were largely farmers and businessmen.<sup>19</sup> Approximately 15 per cent of the students' fathers were skilled workers and only 4 per cent were unskilled laborers. In this study the lower classes made a relatively better showing, but still they were poorly represented in proportion to their numbers in the general population.

More recently in two studies of women students at Indiana University, Mueller and Mueller<sup>20</sup> found a direct relationship between social class and higher education. In their study of 1944-45 they found that whereas the professional classes represented approximately 4.7 per cent of the state population, 17.7 per cent of the women students were affiliated with that class. The professional classes thus had an index of representation of 377. On the other extreme, the unskilled group, representing 20 per cent of the state population and 3.4 per cent of the woman students, only filled approximately 17 per cent of its theoretical quota. The data in their earlier study show almost identical relationships.

A study of the male students at Indiana University in 1947<sup>21</sup> found the professional group contributing the largest proportion of students, 13.9 per cent, while making up



only 4.2 per cent of the state population, and the semi-skilled group the smallest, 6.2 per cent, while representing 19.4 per cent of the state population. The white collar group (professional, business, and clerical) sent 54.7 per cent of the students to the university, while representing only 24.4 per cent of the state population, the blue collar group (skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled) contributed 30.5 per cent of the students, while making up 60.1 per cent of the students, and the farmers (owners and tenants) contributed 9.4 per cent of the students, while representing 14 per cent of the state population.

The usual explanation for the under-representation of the lower classes in institutions of higher learning is that the children from these classes lack intelligence or have no interest in a higher education. To some extent this explanation may be true, but there is no denying of the fact that ambitious lower class children who are seekers after a higher education are often stymied by social and economic handicaps that prevent or preclude social mobility through higher education.

Most people, including some government officials and college presidents, appear to be totally unaware of existing social and economic barriers to higher educational opportunities. "Anyone can go to college who wants to" is heard on every hand. However, the question is, can anyone attend college who has such a desire. The available studies on this subject answer the question in the negative.

#### UNEQUAL COLLEGE OPPORTUNITIES

Parental income was found to be directly related to college attendance in a study by Goetsch<sup>22</sup> of 1,023 high school graduates of above-average intelligence. The intelligent quotients of these students ranged from 117 to 146. At one extreme, 100 per cent of the students coming from families with parental incomes of \$8,000 and over attended college full-time, and at the other extreme, only 20.4 per cent of the students coming from families with parental incomes of

under \$500 attended college (1938). The higher the parents' income the higher was the proportion of children who attended college.

The relative influence of socio-economic background, and test-intelligence on the terminal educational level of students was made the subject of studies by Sibley,<sup>23</sup> and Warner.<sup>24</sup> These studies were based on data collected in an ex post facto investigation made in 1934 by the Pennsylvania State Department of Public Instruction and the American Youth Commission. The data collected included the names of Pennsylvania youth who were in the sixth grade as of 1926, in selected public schools, the highest educational level these students reached by 1934, their test-intelligence, and their fathers' occupation.

In Warner's analysis, 910 of the students with intelligence quotients of 110 or more were divided into two categories on the basis of socio-economic background. Of the upper socio-economic group, 93 per cent graduated from high school and 57 per cent attended college. Of the lower socio-economic group, 72 per cent graduated from high school and 13 per cent attended college. Although both groups were about equal in test-intelligence the chances of attending college increased as socio-economic background increased.

Sibley found in his study, with the influence of parental social status held constant, that a boy with an intelligence quotient of 112 or over held only a four to one advantage over a boy rated 87 or less in reaching an institution of higher learning. However, the influence of socio-economic background on a student's chances of reaching an institution of higher learning was much greater. It was found that boys with fathers in the highest occupational category enjoyed an advantage of more than 10 to 1 over those from the lowest occupational level in their chances of reaching an institution of higher learning. The conclusion was reached that as a student passes through our educational system his

socio-economic background increases in importance per se and in relation to test-intelligence in determining his chances of a higher education.

### DEMOCRATIZING COLLEGE OPPORTUNITIES

That social mobility through higher education can be increased and the going to college made less a special privilege of students from the upper socio-economic groups is revealed in various finding.

1. College enrollments increased sharply with the establishment of the student-aid program in 1935 under the National Youth Administration.<sup>25</sup>

2. Lide<sup>26</sup> in 1934 made a study of the social composition of a junior college organized under the Civil Works Educational Service. He found that approximately 48 per cent of the students came from the lower classes. In comparison with other known studies of this nature these findings represent an unusually high proportion of students from these classes. The results of this study may not be too surprising when it is borne in mind that this particular junior college was established by the federal government for financially circumscribed students, and secondly, the junior college was accessible to a large body of potential day-students. That it takes money to leave home in order to attend college is a self-evident fact that is often overlooked by the proponents of the educational status quo. Helen Goetsch<sup>27</sup> brought this out in her study. She found students who pursued a higher education in Milwaukee came from families with a median income of \$1,604; of youth who went outside of Milwaukee but remained in the state, \$2,571; and of those who went outside of the state, \$3,125.

3. In a study of the effects of the G. I. Bill of Rights on the socio-economic composition of the male student body at Indiana University, it was found that this form of government aid increased the proportion of students from the lower socio-economic groups by over one hundred per cent.<sup>28</sup>

In this study the investigator analyzed the socio-econom-

ic backgrounds of students with military experience and students without military experience. He compared the white collar group with military experience against the white collar group without military experience and found that the former made up 55.1 per cent of the veterans, while the latter made up 61.3 per cent of the non-veterans. The proportion of the blue collar group among the non-veterans was 19.5 per cent, and 32.3 per cent among the veterans. However, when the non-veterans were compared with the veterans who had never been to college (over 47 per cent of the veterans had had some college experience before entering the service) and who had worked at least a year before entering the military, the proportion of students from the blue collar groups increased from 19.5 per cent among the non-veterans to 41.7 per cent among the veterans. The semi-skilled group showed the highest increase, 228.5 per cent, the skilled group was next with an increase of 98.2 per cent, and the unskilled group was last with an increase of 71.4 per cent. The proportion of students from the blue collar groups showed an overall increase of 113 per cent.

### SUMMARY

1. In proportion to population growth and in absolute numbers, enrollment in our institutions of higher learning has increased greatly in the last eighty years.
2. College opportunities are not equal for all socio-economic groups in this country.
3. Public aid to education in the past has increased the proportion of students from the lower classes attending institutions of higher learning.

### CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the above limited study it may tentatively be hypothesized that:

1. Social mobility through higher education in this country is a function of socio-economic background.

2. Increased enrollments in institutions of higher learning do not automatically mean increased social mobility.

3. The opportunities for social mobility through higher education in this country are limited because of the selective nature of higher education and the diminishing value of a college education.

4. A program of national scholarships and fellowships would offer the only opportunities many capable young men and women in our society would have of attending college, and thus enable them to improve their social positions in our social structure. The chances are that such a program would increase the amount of social mobility in this country, which is said to be decreasing, and thus help to prevent the development of a rigid class system which is anathema to this nation's tradition of classlessness, and secondly, since it is no longer merely a matter of opinion that there is a great deal of latent talent among the children of the lower classes, such a system would enable our society to make a more efficient use of its collective ability than it has heretofore done.

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<sup>1</sup> See Robert and Helen Lynd, *Middletown in Transition*, 1937, pp. 70-71, and chapter 12; F. W. Taussig and C. S. Joslyn, *American Business Leaders*, 1932, chapters 10 and 11; and W. L. Warner et al., *The Social System of the Modern Factory*, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> See P. Sorokin, *Social Mobility*, 1927.

<sup>3</sup> See P. E. Davidson and H. D. Anderson, *Occupational Mobility in an American Community*, 1937; R. Centers, "Occupational Mobility of Urban Occupational Strata," *American Sociological Review*, 13 (April, 1948), 197-203; S. Adams, "Regional Differences in Vertical Mobility in a High Status Occupation," *American Sociological Review*, 15 (April, 1950), 228-235; and C. C. North and P. K. Hatt, "Jobs and Occupations: a Popular Evaluation," *Opinion News*, Sept., 1, 1947, pp. 3-13.

<sup>4</sup> See A. Hansen, "Industrial Class Alignments in the United States," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 17 (Dec., 1920), 417-425; T. Sogge, "Industrial Classes in the United States in 1930," *ibid.*, 28 (June, 1933), 199-203; and A. M. Edwards, *Comparative Occupational Statistics, U. S., 1870-1940*, 16th Census, U. S. Bureau of Census, 1943, pp. 183-189.

<sup>5</sup> See Hansen, *op. cit.*, Sogge, *op. cit.*, Edwards, *op. cit.*, Adams, *op. cit.*, and C. W. Mills, "The Middle Classes in Middle-sized Cities," *American Sociological Review*, 10 (April, 1945), 242-249.

<sup>6</sup> See D. S. Bridgman, "Success in College and Business," *Personnel Journal*, 9 (Jan., 1930), 1-19, and W. L. Warner et al., *Social Class in America*, 1949, p. 29.



<sup>7</sup> See W. L. Warner *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. 23, and W. L. Warner *et al.*, *Who Shall Be Educated?*, 1944, p. 36 and p. 48.

<sup>8</sup> See P. H. Landis, *Population Problems*, 1943, p. 24, J. F. Cuber, *Sociology*, 1951, p. 512, and S. Eldridge *et al.*, *Fundamentals of Sociology*, 1950, p. 547.

<sup>9</sup> W. L. Warner *et al.*, *Who Shall Be Educated?*, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> J. F. Cuber and R. A. Harper, *Problems of American Society: Values in Conflict*, 1951, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> See P. H. Landis, *Man in Environment*, 1949, pp. 304-305.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted by R. Tunley in "Is Your White Collar Strangling You?" *American* (May, 1951), p. 131.

<sup>13</sup> See "Wage Earners Rival Bosses," *U. S. News and World Report*, 29 (Dec. 1, 1950), p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> A. B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth*, 1949, p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> L. V. Koos, *The Junior College*, University of Minnesota press, 1924.

<sup>16</sup> J. F. Towell, "The Social and Educational Status of the Pupils in a Residential Suburban Community," *School Review*, 37 (Jan., 1929), 49-58.

<sup>17</sup> O. E. Reynolds, *Social and Economic Status of College Students*, Doctor's Thesis, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1927.

<sup>18</sup> E. T. Potthoff, "Who Goes to College," *Journal of Higher Education*, 2 (Jan., 1931), 294-297.

<sup>19</sup> M. Moffett, *Social Background and Activities of Teachers' College Students*, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1929.

<sup>20</sup> J. H. Mueller and K. H. Mueller, "Social-Economic Background and Campus Success," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 3 (Summer, 1943), 143-150, and "Socio-Economic Background of Women Students at Indiana University," *ibid.*, 9 (Autumn, 1949), 321-329.

<sup>21</sup> R. A. Mulligan, "Socio-Economic Background and College Enrollment," *American Sociological Review*, 16 (April, 1951), 188-196.

<sup>22</sup> H. B. Goetsch, *Parental Income and College Opportunities*, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 795, Columbia U., 1940.

<sup>23</sup> E. Sibley, "Some Demographic Clues to Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, 7 (June, 1942), 322-330.

<sup>24</sup> W. L. Warner *et al.*, *Who Shall Be Educated?*, pp. 51-52 and 175-176.

<sup>25</sup> See W. L. Warner *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>26</sup> E. S. Lide, "The Social Composition of the CWES Junior College in Chicago," *School Review*, 43 (Jan., 1935), 28-33.

<sup>27</sup> H. B. Goetsch, *op. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> R. A. Mulligan, *op. cit.*; also see E. L. Clark, "Veterans as a College Freshman," *School and Society*, 46 (Sept., 1947), 205-207.

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## SOCIAL CLASS INVESTIGATIONS

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How do the reports of these researches relate to the comments on research which were listed in the introductory remarks? All of them deal with what is currently recognized as "a big idea": Social Class in America. One of them touches directly upon the significant question of mobility in a social class system; another deals with the aspirations of high school seniors as these relate to social class status; a third asserts its purpose to be a study of social class variations in the teacher-pupil relationship; and a fourth inquires into the systems of rewards and penalties of selected junior high schools and relationships to the social status system. Clearly, the ideas are large in scope and deal with a concept that is pervasive in our society generally. While no single investigation tries to deal with society "as a whole", each in its way is vitally concerned with what is considered to be a major characteristic of our society.

With the single exception of Mulligan's report, they all rely completely upon the Warner technique for the identification of social class, and implicitly they all accept his formulation of what constitutes social class status. In Warner's work, this seems to be a kind of social prestige rating; there is an implication of deference or superiority in the hierarchies established. These investigators do not seriously consider alternative formulations concerning social class. The identification of the social class status of individuals is arrived at by accepting the several indices that Warner and his associates found to be highly correlated with what purported to be findings arrived at by interview methods. Within the studies here presented, no investigator made independent checks of reliability and validity of the indices.

With respect to the careful formulation of hypotheses, the article by Abrahamson is the exception. His investigation is guided by a rather clear-cut idea which was expressed explicitly before his study was initiated. He was

guided in the design of his study, the collecting of his data, and the organizing of the data by a controlling idea. The problem is clearly stated, and the techniques clearly set forth. It falls short in the sense that rival hypotheses are not at all considered, to see if the accumulated data would be just as explanatory or perhaps even more convincing in support of other hypotheses.

In Becker's investigation, he seems to disavow having had any hypothesis related to social class differences among students when he began his study. In other words, the study was not controlled by any such idea, and yet his conclusions are brought into direct relationship with social class distinctions. In this study again, there is no attempt to consider alternative explanations for the trends found, and in terms of the criteria set forth earlier, this investigator is logically unable to draw conclusions which test any hypothesis about social class variations in the teacher-pupil relationship. If such conclusions are to be drawn, it would be necessary to formulate a method for identifying the social class status of students; it would be necessary to set forth an hypothesis about teacher-pupil relationships as these bear upon social class differences; it would be necessary to develop observational techniques for the recording of teacher-pupil interactions; it would be necessary to demonstrate the reliability and validity of these observations; it would be necessary to find ways of categorizing these observations which would be reliable; it would be necessary to distinguish them in qualitative and perhaps quantitative ways so that relationships could be established in the status system.

As now reported, Becker's study is an exploratory one. It can culminate only in ideas which might be fruitful for careful *subsequent* testing. From the point of view of this particular reader, no conclusions as such can be drawn from the investigation. It should be added that the statements made in the last section of the article often go beyond the data as reported. We are not told that teachers were interviewed about their image of the ideal pupil. This seems to

be an inference which is drawn from what the teachers say. There is a statement that teachers find it impossible to work effectively with children who do not meet the standards of this image and that these children are produced by a stratified urban society. Some of the other concluding statements are more cautiously worded. Even so, from investigation of this kind it is not possible to draw conclusions that bear upon an hypothesis because there was no hypothesis which functioned to control the investigation.

In the investigation of the wishes of high school seniors, Smith collects wishes and then sorts them, and then indicates a percentage distribution of these sortings in the different social class categories. In his conclusions, he generalizes freely about the acquired concerns of youth, about social learnings, that ideals, hopes etc. are picked up through membership in a neighborhood, a family, a social group, and that these represent class teachings. All of this is said in a paragraph which is introduced as though the evidence supported it. As a matter of fact, evidence was not reported respecting these points. There are many such statements that seem to be considerably beyond the evidence presented. Even the data with respect to wishes may be unreliable. No effort was made to get comparable samples and to contrast the percentages found in several samples. With no hypothesis guiding the collection of the data, alternative hypotheses were inadequately considered. The implicit theory suggests that environment only need be considered in explaining the behavior of youth. Under these circumstances it is not even possible to draw a conclusion which states that there is a relationship "between desires of Negro high school seniors and social class." The assumptions necessary to accept this conclusion when based only on the evidence here presented, are unreasonable in terms of casual acceptance.

Mulligan set for himself the task of examining the literature to unearth relationships between social mobility and

higher education. Just what he means by mobility is not always clear, and in bringing together the results of different investigations, he risks the danger of combining what is not combinable. If the several studies are concerned with different conceptions of what constitutes mobility, a summary of them may be more confusing than revealing. He recognizes this problem, warns the reader about it, and then goes ahead with the job.

The different studies evidently made use of different ideas of social class. The studies were made over a period of approximately thirty years. With no clear-cut ideas controlling the collection of data, this author, too, is in the position of not being able to draw conclusions that bear upon some significant hypothesis. In his section relating to conclusions, he very carefully limits his possibilities by saying that they are tentative hypotheses. His first hypothesis clearly states that social mobility is a *function* of socioeconomic background. Just how this can be hypothesized as a functional relationship is not clear from the data presented. If mobility is thought of as both downward and upward, and perhaps contains some ideas of horizontal movement, it is not clear how this hypothesis is to be generalized from the data presented.

The second hypothesis says that increased enrollments in institutions of higher learning do not automatically mean increased social mobility. Depending upon the meaning of the word *automatically*, this hypothesis might be equally well supported by a few isolated cases among college graduates who represent downward mobility. The third hypothesis is stated in *causal* terms, and states very definitely that "opportunities for social mobility through higher education in this country are limited *because* of the selective nature of higher education, and the diminishing value of a college education." The interpretation of this statement would be considerably easier if we knew what was meant by *cause* in this context.



All of these studies are in a sense devoted to the finding of correlations. In each the concluding remarks deal with a relationship between social class status and the various other categories of evidence which were the subject of inquiry. In Abrahamson's work, he examines rather critically three related assumptions; those dealing with intelligence, ability, and motivation. Authorities are quoted in support of his acceptance of these assumptions. In the remaining studies, little attention is given to this identification of major assumptions underlying the research. None of the studies represents an attempt to secure comparable groups. Predictions were not attempted and yet, implicit in the concluding remarks is the idea that similar findings would probably show up if these investigations were duplicated. As has been repeatedly pointed out, this does not follow from the designs of the studies.

Conclusions about the influence of social class seem to prove too much. Surely we must all have respect for that evidence which indicates the influence that heredity and constitutional factors may have upon behavior. We should all have some respect for the findings of dynamic psychology and the evidence which it presents bearing upon the influence of the earliest years of childhood on human growth and development. Certainly serious consideration must be given to the role of accident, or incident, or coincidence, or casual routines of a unique character in the development of behavior. And while sociological investigations may concentrate upon the role that social institutions play in shaping and influencing character and personality, it does not seem at all reasonable that this would be the *only* explanation offered to support conclusions which seek to explain the behavior of people as individuals, or as groups, or as societies. There is need for a more comprehensive orientation to the problems of human behavior. Researches into educational sociology should consider competing hypotheses in the planning of the inquiries and in the interpreting of the data which were collected because of their relevance to the several competing ideas.

